

# **Summary of the Office of Environment, Safety and Health Evaluations (OA-50) Appraisal Process**

## **Pre-Scoping Visit Activities**

Site selection is determined in advance and documented in the formal OA integrated assessment schedule. OA plans the inspection schedule in advance with firm dates for the scoping visit, evaluation, and validation periods listed for the upcoming year. OA coordinates with Headquarters program offices and the sites to establish the integrated assessment schedule. Additionally, OA formally notifies the site of the scoping visit and upcoming inspection by memorandum. The team leader will coordinate with each site to arrange for administrative support, requested presentations, tours of facilities, documents needed for the visit, and visit schedule/agenda. The team leader will request a listing of site counterparts to work with individual team members to coordinate activities for specific inspection areas. The team leader will coordinate interviews with site counterparts prior to the scoping visit. Pre-scoping visit activities also typically include interviews with DOE Headquarters staff with responsibility for site program elements.

## **Scoping Visit**

Scoping visits generally entail three days on site with the team typically traveling to the site on a Monday and returning home on Friday. OA management, the team leader, and selected members of the team participate in the scoping visit. The purpose of the scoping visit includes the following:

- Understand the DOE and contractor organizational structure and approach to Integrated Safety Management.
- Conduct the OA in brief for the inspection (preliminary scope, and approach).
- Receive briefings from the site on programs, facilities, and work in progress.
- Brief stakeholders on the OA process and the assessment activity.
- Arrange for site and facility training, badging, dosimetry, and record access.
- Coordinate logistics for the team to include office space, conference rooms, LAN access, etc.
- Tour selected site facilities and operations for familiarization and to identify focus areas for evaluation.
- Meet DOE and contractor counterparts and arrange to obtain additional documentation.
- Interview key DOE and contractor managers and staff.
- Coordinate the scope of the inspection with input from line management and stakeholders.

Generally, the first day of the scoping visit is for training, badging, dosimetry, interviews, and briefings. Site and facility tours usually start the afternoon of the first day, or in the morning of the second day. The last day is reserved for the team to meet counterparts, to request additional documentation, and learn more about specific facilities, programs, and activities in their assigned areas. A “path forward” discussion is held with site management to discuss the next steps prior to exiting the site.

## **Evaluation Planning**

With the information gained from the scoping visit, the team leader finalizes the team roster and prepares the evaluation plan with input from the team. The evaluation plan is reviewed and approved by OA management and is provided to the site before the onsite evaluation period. When site counterparts are assigned, team members will contact their counterparts, obtain information, arrange onsite interviews, request specific presentations (e.g., work planning and control, specific work projects, environmental projects), and schedule walkdowns. The specific onsite activities will be documented in each team member’s weekly schedule. The schedule for

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each team member for the first week will be sent to the site before the onsite evaluation period. Once on site, individual schedules will be updated on a daily basis and provided to the site.

### **Evaluation Period**

The inspection period is generally two weeks on site, starting on Monday of the first week through Thursday of the following week. The team performs the bulk of the data collection during the first week; focusing on verifying that work is performed safely and that management systems are in place to ensure safe operations. The team performs additional document reviews during the weekend, typically off site. A mid-evaluation summary, for team use only, is prepared on Saturday, based on written input from each team member, to be used for a more detailed briefing for site management on Monday. The second week is used to follow-up on items identified during the first week, perform additional observation of work activities, and to continue validation of information with site counterparts and site management. An essential element of all OA evaluations is that all information (positive attributes, questions, concerns, and findings) is communicated to site counterparts when identified and continuously updated during the evaluation period. This communication ensures that site counterparts and management are fully informed, have many opportunities to provide additional information and openly discuss issues with the team to ensure there is no misunderstanding of the facts. This continued validation of information facilitates the formal factual accuracy review conducted during the validation week discussed below.

During the evaluation, team members prepare a daily report documenting their activities, interview results, document reviews, and other pertinent information. The daily reports are used during the team meeting (usually held around 4:30 p.m. each day) where team members present information to the rest of the team and team management. The team leader summarizes the information and briefs site personnel on a daily basis (time to be agreed upon by site management) each morning. Copies of the daily reports are not releasable to the site as the information is pre-decisional; however, team members share the essence of all daily report information with site counterparts.

Evaluation activities typically include personnel interviews, walkdowns, field inspection of facilities and equipment, document reviews, observation of work activities and operations, and performance testing. Performance testing could include evaluation of a drill or exercise, noise measurements of suspected high noise areas, observation of operators performing normal, abnormal, or emergency operations, and walkdown of procedures with personnel to determine adequacy of training and qualification. Because team members will be observing work activities, they will be alert for any instances of unsafe work practices or activities.

Near the end of the onsite evaluation, team members will meet with their counterparts and perform a series of preliminary validations to ensure that all the questions, observations, and potential findings are communicated and understood by the site. It is essential that site counterparts continuously share information with site management based on the continuous validation conducted by the team from the start of the evaluation. The team leader will hold an informal out briefing with management at the end of the second week (usually Thursday).

### **Report Writing**

Team members prepare their draft report input for review and integration into a final draft report with input from team management, technical writers, and OA management. Once the draft is complete, an OA Quality Review Board reviews the report to ensure it is accurate, fair, balanced, and consistent. For inspection activities, the conclusions reached through analysis of results lead

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to the development of findings, opportunities for improvement, and the assignment of ratings. Areas are not “rated” until the report is in draft and has been reviewed with OA management and the Quality Review Board. The ratings are “Effective Performance”, “Needs Improvement”, or “Significant Weakness”. See *OA Appraisal Process Protocols*, January 2002, Section 5, listed under Guidance Documents at <http://reports.oa.doe.gov> for definitions. Ratings are assigned to those Guiding Principles and Core Functions of Integrated Safety Management that are evaluated during the inspection. A copy of the draft report is provided to the site before the team returns for factual accuracy validation.

### **Onsite Validation**

The onsite validation is usually performed one or two weeks after the evaluation period ends. The team leader and selected members of the team return to the site (usually on a Tuesday morning). Team members perform informal validations with site counterparts, usually on Tuesday, and clarify wording in the report and make suggested changes where appropriate. The goal is to ensure a factually accurate report, to consider other changes requested by the site, and to ensure that points of disagreement are understood prior to the formal validation. During the formal validation (usually on Wednesday), the team leader and sub-team leaders will guide the discussion through the report on a line-by-line, or page-by-page manner requesting comments. To facilitate the formal validation, the site should consolidate written comments and assign one presenter for DOE site office comments, and one presenter for contractor comments. This also ensures that the comments represent the DOE site office and contractor management position. The validation will focus on factual accuracy. Grammatical and typographical comments are generally not discussed during the formal validation to ensure time is spent on significant comments. Minor comments should be given to the team leader or team members for consideration.

After the validation, and before leaving the site, the team considers the site's comments and makes appropriate changes to the draft report. Some areas of disagreement may remain, but it is important the team and the site know and understand those areas. OA management will hold a formal out briefing with the site after the formal validation, usually on Thursday. The modified (final) draft report is left with the site for a formal ten-day written comment period. OA management considers those comments and appropriate changes are made to the report prior to publication.

### **Corrective Actions**

Corrective action plans for findings identified in the report require formal corrective action plan development and submittal in accordance with the provisions of DOE Order 470.2B, *Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance Program*, approved October 31, 2002. Actions for other deficiencies or opportunities for improvement identified in the report are developed and implemented in accordance with line management processes.

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